

Draft Environmental Impact Statement

When a plan or project potentially involves a significant federal action or federal funding, then a federal Environmental Impact Statement may be required. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the 15-20 year vision known as the "Amended Draft Single Package" has been prepared by the Antelope Valley Study Team. In turn, the Federal Government published in the Federal Register a Notice on the Availability, June 30,

vehicle access routes would be altered (but maintained).

Safety and Security: Four at-grade rail crossings would be removed to improve safety. Some emergency vehicle response routes would change, but access would be maintained and improved. The potential for loss of property and life during a 100-year flood would be virtually eliminated.

Environmental Justice: Neither minority nor low-income populations will receive disproportionately high or adverse impacts as a result of a project. The southernmost one-fourth of the study area has the highest percentage of minority and low-income populations. While there are impacts to this area (for example, most residential buildings that would be acquired are in the southernmost study section), the benefit would be that remaining homes and businesses would no longer be within a floodplain. Traffic would not use residential streets as a throughway. New housing and rehabilitation programs are centered in these areas, too.

Acquisition and Relocation: With the Amended Draft Single Package, 46 residential buildings containing 48 households, and 64 privately-owned, non-residential buildings containing 44 businesses would be acquired at fair market value. Eleven publicly owned buildings would also be acquired and replaced along with three softball fields and four other UNL recreation fields/courts. Relocation assistance would be provided in accordance with federal and state requirements. Some homes deemed structurally sound and consistent with neighborhood integrity may be relocated to nearby vacant parcels as part of a separate City community revitalization program.

Economic: In the short-term, the Amended Draft Single Package would slightly reduce annual property tax revenues. However, the long-term gains in tax revenues as the downtown and neighborhood redevelopment plans are realized would more than offset the short-term losses. The Amended Draft Single Package would also generate construction jobs over a 15-year period. Some jobs may relocate outside the study area through business relocations, but downtown redevelopment and some of the community revitalization measures would create new jobs for area residents.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists: There would be positive, long-term impacts on the bicycle and pedestrian environment. Safety would be enhanced as pedestrians and bicyclists are separated from motor vehicle and rail traffic. Connecting the separate trails will encourage broader use of the system.

Air Quality: Air quality at over-capacity intersections would be better under the Amended Draft Single Package since cars would idle less at over-capacity intersections.

Noise: With the Amended Draft Single Package, 15 study area properties have been identified with a potential exterior noise impact as defined by the Federal Highway Administration. Of these, 12 are residential, two are commercial, and one is recreational. A range of actions to mitigate noise was considered, including constructing noise barriers, or installing acoustical windows. The City may also choose to establish buffer zones through zoning to limit development in areas where traffic noise is incompatible with land uses.

Vibrations: No adverse long-term impacts are anticipated since roadway vibrations at the UNL Beadle Center—where sensitive microscopes are in use—are very low and are less than those already caused by the building's mechanical systems.

Floodplains: With the Amended Draft

Single Package, the Antelope Creek floodplain would be reduced to a channel, resulting in about 1,100 fewer structures within the floodplain.

Threatened and Endangered Species: No threatened and endangered species are located within the study area.

Water Body Modification: The Amended Draft Single Package would provide long-term wildlife and aquatic habitat improvements through an increased length of open stream, improved channel cross section, a continuous landscaped greenbelt, and a new pond near Lewis Ball Fields.

Cultural Resources: The Amended Draft Single Package alignments and character avoid adverse effect on any protected cultural resource, except the environs of the



Design charette of potential development south of "O" Street.

2000, that the 446 page Antelope Valley Draft Environmental Impact Statement meets federal requirements for completeness and is ready for a minimum 45 day public review and comment period. After the comment period is over and the document is revised accordingly to address substantive comments, the completed Environmental Impact Statement is given to decision makers to utilize in their decision-making process.

An Environmental Impact Statement is a document containing thorough information about a proposed action. The Environmental Impact Statement process helps assure that significant adverse impacts possibly resulting from the Amended Draft Single Package have been avoided where possible and that any remaining adverse impacts will be beneficially mitigated. The reasonable alternatives evaluated in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement includes only the Amended Draft Single Package (Preferred Alternative) and a No-Action Alternative.

Highlights Of Some Of The Potential Major Environmental Impact Areas

Compared to the No-Action Alternative, some of the potential major environmental impact areas of the Amended Draft Single Package are:

Affected Communities:

Neighborhood Cohesion: With the Amended Draft Single Package, existing neighborhood boundaries would be reinforced with clear land use and transition boundaries. Overall quality of life for residents would be improved as cut-through traffic is removed from neighborhood streets.

Community Resources: Trail connections and recreational opportunities would be enhanced, service access to downtown for residents would be improved, and some

Summary of Environmental Impacts

Potential Impacts	Alternative Considered	
	Amended Draft Single Package	No-Action Alternative
Affected Communities	Impacts are overwhelmingly positive since linear improvements follow neighborhood boundaries.	There would be no impacts, other than those associated with non-Antelope Valley projects.
Environmental Justice	Most benefits and impacts occur in the southern most one-fourth of the study area, the area of Lincoln with the highest percentage of minority and low-income residents. Extensive public involvement effort has included representatives from the southern most study section.	There would be no impacts, other than those associated with non-Antelope Valley projects. Benefits of the Amended Draft Single Package would not be realized.
Land Use	The Amended Draft Single Package would introduce facilities that are consistent with land uses in the study area.	The No-Action Alternative would maintain mismatched land uses downtown, and is less consistent with the officially adopted plans of the study Partners.
Acquisition and Relocation	121 buildings would be acquired, including 46 residential buildings (48 households) and 75 commercial buildings (44 businesses), includes 11 public buildings.	There would be no impacts, other than those associated with non-Antelope Valley projects.
Economic Impacts	Long-term gains in tax revenues would result as the downtown redevelopment plans are realized, offsetting any short-term losses. The Amended Draft Single Package would generate construction jobs for 15 years. Some jobs would be moved outside the study area, but downtown redevelopment and revitalization measures would create new jobs for area residents.	Tax revenues would remain the same or decline, while far less construction-related employment and little long-term job creation would occur.
Pedestrians and Bicyclists	New trails and trail connections would be provided at key links.	Trails would remain unlinked through downtown, with no new north-south scenic trail along Antelope Creek.
Air Quality	No air quality impacts are anticipated.	No impacts are anticipated
Noise	Impacts would occur at 15 properties, with mitigation considered for each.	No impacts are anticipated
Vibrations	No long-term impacts are anticipated, and short-term impacts would be mitigated.	No impacts are anticipated
Lighting	No impacts with light side-shields at Beadle Center.	No lighting impacts are anticipated
Wetlands	An estimated 0.36 hectare (0.90 acre) of wetlands would be affected and potential mitigation sites are under investigation. Permit applications would be prepared during final design, prior to construction.	No impacts would occur, other than those associated with non-Antelope Valley projects.
Floodplains	Antelope Creek floodplain width would be reduced. Reduced risk of flooding would remove disincentives to redevelopment, reduce flood insurance costs for many, improve public safety, and enable revitalization of urban core.	No change to Antelope Creek floodplain would occur.
Threatened/Endanger Species	No impacts would occur.	No impacts would occur.
Farmland	No impacts would occur.	No impacts would occur.
Water Quality	No impacts are anticipated. Potential aquatic wildlife benefits with well water supplements to Antelope Creek during low flow periods.	No impacts are anticipated.
Water Body Modifications	Long-term wildlife and aquatic habitat improvements would occur through improved channel morphology, a continuous landscaped greenbelt, and possible supplementation of streamflow and a new pond.	No impacts are anticipated.
Cultural Resources	Three potentially National Register of Historic Places-eligible archeological sites and six historic buildings would be adversely effected.	No impacts are anticipated.
Environmental Risk Sites	Hazardous substance and petroleum release sites would be avoided to the extent possible. Where encountered, contaminated soil will be removed and contaminated water treated in accordance with state law.	No impacts are anticipated.
Visual Impacts	The few important views in the study area, such as that of the State Capitol, would not be negatively impacted. The intersection of the North-South and East-West Roadways would be elevated and would be visible in the surrounding vicinity—thus, changing the existing visual character.	No impacts would occur.
Energy	The one-time expenditure of energy during construction would eventually be compensated somewhat by long-term energy savings.	No impacts would occur.
Physiography, Topography, Geology and Soils.	No impacts would occur.	No impacts would occur.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No impacts would occur.	No impacts would occur.
Coastal Zones & Management	No impacts would occur.	No impacts would occur.
Permits	All necessary permits will be applied for prior to construction.	No impacts would occur.
Construction	Short-term impacts to be mitigated to the extent practical.	No impacts would occur.

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State Arsenal listed in the National Register of Historic Places and five houses, potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Mitigation to protect the State Arsenal may include improved displaying area around the building. The historic houses may be relocated under the City's community revitalization program. However, if it is determined that any of them cannot be moved, such buildings would be documented prior to being removed.

Environmental Risk Sites: Based on a search of federal and state databases, nine potential hazardous substance release sites, 51 known petroleum release sites, and 59 potential petroleum release sites are located adjacent to components of the Amended Draft Single Package. Mitigation measures include avoiding the sites, removing the contaminated media or building materials, or treating contamination on-site.

Visual: The intersection of the North-South and East-West Roadways, however, would be elevated approximately 9 meters (30 feet) above grade, and would be visible in the surrounding vicinity—thus, changing the

sion, water quality degradation, noise, and vibration. Appropriate mitigation would be provided for all identified impacts. Short-term impacts would be managed and mitigated through an agreement between JAVA, the Partners, and the construction contractor.

Relationship Between Short-term Uses of Man's Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-term Productivity: More consistent land use patterns in central Lincoln would evolve, socioeconomic systems would benefit from private investment opportunities, through traffic would be removed from residential neighborhoods, safety would be improved at railroad crossings, and access to goods and services in Lincoln's core would be improved. Impacts to ecological systems would be minimal.

Secondary Impacts: A number of the community revitalization components are secondary actions since they are dependent on containing the Antelope Creek floodplain and/or providing better access to and from Lincoln's core. These components include the downtown supermarket, downtown mixed-use development, stormwater conveyance-related parks, new downtown

natives around these areas. In addition, a greater percentage of intersections would be over capacity with the No-Action Alternative as compared to the Amended Draft Single Package (62 vs. 30 percent).

Access: The angled railroad tracks in the study area create problems for traffic operations by blocking some streets from connecting over the tracks. More and longer trains block traffic on streets that do cross the tracks for several hours every day. Future traffic (over 77,000 vehicles per day) will continue to be subject to delays at the Study's four railroad crossings at 14th, 17th, 33rd, and Adams Streets. The Amended Draft Single Package eliminates the grade crossings and introduces new structures to accommodate grade-separated roadway traffic at the railroad tracks. These improvements will reduce traveler delays and safety.

Section 4(f): The Amended Draft Single Package potentially encroaches upon five Section 4(f) protected resources and upon three archeological sites. Therefore, there would be a Section 4(f) use of the resources. Meetings have been held with responsible officials to discuss potential Section 4(f) impacts and appropriate



Holmes Lake provides suburban flood control, a park and recreation opportunities.

existing visual character. The important views in the study area, such as that of the State Capitol, would not be negatively impacted.

Permits: Among those permits and compliances necessary for the Amended Draft Single Package are: US Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 401 Water Quality Certification (NDEQ), City of Lincoln/Lancaster County Floodplain Development Permit, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. Agreements with the BNSF Railway and area utilities are also necessary.

Construction: Short-term impacts associated with the Amended Draft Single Package include traffic, air quality, soil ero-

housing, and trails. The impacts of these actions are overwhelmingly positive. Other actions that are planned (sometimes by others) to occur include redevelopment at State Fair Park, construction of a new health clinic, and the relocation of displaced housing to vacant, in-fill sites.

Traffic Impacts: The growth forecast in Lincoln is expected to result in a 44 percent increase in overall traffic as the region approaches the "Build Out Scenario," which provides the basis for the No-Action Alternative and the Amended Draft Single Package. Under the No-Action Alternative, more traffic to and from downtown uses streets that would go through neighborhoods and UNL because there are few alter-

mitigation. They agree there are no feasible and prudent alternatives to avoid the remaining impacts, and every effort has been made to minimize harm, and mitigate impacts.

Other: The other potential major environmental impact areas that are included in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement are: demographics; land use; lighting; wetlands; water quality; energy; wild and scenic rivers; coastal barriers; coastal zones; relationship between short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity; any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action; and cumulative impacts. See the summary box to page 18.

A Final Thought

"On behalf of the three

Partners, we hope you have a clearer vision of the Antelope

Valley picture," said Mayor Don

Wesely. "After four years of study,

it is now time for the community

to review that picture,

ask questions and formulate its

collective preference. Then we

can turn the study into a set of

projects and start implementing

the first set of proposed storm-

water, transportation and com-

munity revitalization projects."

"The vision is exciting," the

Mayor added. "The price tag is

high, but it is affordable when

funded over a period of years,

with other levels of government

and the private sector contribu-

ting to the project costs. This

community can grow in a quality

manner and still keep taxes

affordable. We need to balance a

healthy, safe and prosperous city

core with a vibrant and expan-

ding community edge. In the

three Partner's opinion, it is now

time to move forward and imple-

ment this visionary project."